

BEFORE THE
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

POSTAL RATE AND FEE CHANGES, 2001

Docket No. R2001-1

**PARTIAL OBJECTION OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO
THE OFFICE OF THE CONSUMER ADVOCATE'S INTERROGATORY
OCA/USPS-7 and JOINT MOTION FOR PROTECTIVE CONDITIONS
(October 9, 2001)**

In accordance with Rules 25 and 26 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Postal Service hereby objects to parts of interrogatory OCA/USPS-7, filed on September 28, 2001. The grounds for the objection are that the interrogatory requests information that is irrelevant and commercially sensitive.

Some of the requested information is relevant but because of its commercially sensitive nature, it should not be provided unless it is subject to the standard protective conditions. The Postal Service hereby requests that the Commission establish protective conditions to govern the provision of the data. OCA joins in the motion for protective conditions.

I. Preliminary Statement

Interrogatory 7 requests two customer survey forms and their results for FY00 and 01. Interrogatory 7(a) requests the Residential and Business-Satisfaction Survey forms. The Postal Service has no objection to providing the survey forms and will do so formally when it files its answer to the interrogatory.

Interrogatory 7 (b) requests: “For each year and each three month period in FY 2000 and FY 2001, please provide by postal region, a copy of the survey results referred to in the case study.” The Postal Service objects to providing the survey results on the grounds that they are, with a few exceptions discussed below, irrelevant to the determination of rates and fees. Moreover, the Postal Service objects to the release of the results on the grounds that they are commercially sensitive.

The undersigned counsel has discussed this interrogatory, the objection, and motion for protective order with OCA counsel. The Postal Service has informed OCA Counsel that it does not oppose providing the national survey results about specific classes of mail as long as the information is subject to protective conditions. OCA counsel has authorized the undersigned to make a joint motion for protective conditions, however, he reserves the right to seek additional information upon review of the survey forms. Moreover, OCA Counsel has agreed that the results may be provided at the national level rather than “by postal region.”

II. Specific Objections

A. Residential Survey Results

None of the questions in the Residential Survey seeks customer input about a specific class of mail. (Attachment A is a copy of the form sent to residential customers quarterly.) Instead, the questions relate to overall and non-class specific performance about the mail received, the mail sent, the post office,

and other postal services. Customers are asked to rate whether a “[c]arrier was professional and courteous” (Attachment A, Question 1 d); the “ease of buying stamps” (Id. at Question 5 a); or whether a clerk greeted a customer pleasantly at the Post Office (Id. at Question 9 a). Since the questions do not identify a specific class of mail, none of the results are relevant to a proceeding under 39 U.S.C. §§3622 and 3623.

Moreover, the survey results are commercially sensitive. On a quarterly basis, the Postal Service surveys 200,000 residential customers. This market research is pure gold to any private sector company in the mail shipping, receiving or delivery businesses. Release of this research would provide, at no cost, a valuable analysis of the market in which the Postal Service and its competitors operate. This information could be used to compete aggressively for many of the services or products that the Postal Service provides. It is proprietary to the Postal Service.

B. Business-Satisfaction Survey Results

Only a few of the questions on the Business Customer Satisfaction Survey request information about customers’ experiences with specific classes of mail. (Attachment B is a copy of the survey sent to business customers quarterly. See Questions 1 i, j, and m; 9 a-h, 27 a-d, and 28 a-d). The rests of the questions are not class specific and therefore their results are irrelevant. Furthermore, the Postal Service objects to the general release of the results of the Business

Customer Satisfaction Survey on the grounds that they are commercially sensitive for the reasons stated above.

While the Postal Service is willing to provide the business survey results for Questions 1 i, j, and m; 9 a-h, 27 a-d, and 28 a-d subject to protective conditions, it does not concede the probative value of the information for a determination of the proposed rates and fees.

III. Motion for Protective Conditions

The Postal Service and OCA respectfully request that the Commission adopt protective conditions so that the results of Questions 1 i, j, and m; 9 a-h, 27 a-d, and 28 a-d of Attachment B hereto can be provided. The protective conditions are necessary because of the commercial sensitivity of the information. The Postal Service and OCA request that the Commission adopt the conditions as set forth in Attachment A to the Motion of the United States Postal Service's for Waiver and for Protective Conditions for Library References concerning Costs Associated with the FEDEX Transportation Agreement filed on September 4, 2001 in this proceeding. Similar conditions were used in Docket

No. R2000-1. See Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R2000-1/20, March 27, 2000
and Presiding Officer's Ruling No. R2000-1/22, March 29, 2000.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

By its attorneys:

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document upon all
participants of record in this proceeding in accordance with section 12 of the Rules of
Practice.

Nan K. McKenzie

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